

Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 10, 2006
Honan-Allston Library
6:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
Cathi Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Brian Golden
Michael Hanlon
Millie Hollum McLaughlin
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Gerald Autler
Linda Kowalcky

Department of Transportation

Adam Shulman

Harvard University

John Audi
Jim Barrows
Gary Hammer
Kevin McCluskey
Dan Rabinovitz
Alison Reinhardt
Kathy Spiegelman

II. Minutes

Gerald Autler called the meeting to order at approximately 6:40 p.m. and circulated the meeting minutes from the March 29th meeting. Gerald turned the meeting over to Kathy Spiegelman.

Kathy indicated that at the previous meeting Harvard made a presentation on the preliminary open space plan for Harvard's Allston Development. She said that Harvard wants to familiarize the Task Force with the transportation and open space systems that are being developed as the foundation for Harvard's plan. Kathy explained that while both the open space and

transportation plans are still evolving, Harvard would like to get started on the review process so that the Task Force can provide feedback to help inform the direction of the plans. Kathy invited the Task Force members to share their feedback on the open space plan presented at the previous meeting. Paul Berkeley raised questions about the concept of the canal and its placement. Ray Mellone also questioned the placement of the canal and suggested that it takes up a lot of land. He asked what the alternative would be for that land if the canal didn't make it into the plan. Kathy explained that the idea is to create a pedestrian system that includes Harvard's athletics fields. The canal is only one idea to try and accomplish this and there are other ways that it can be done. Kathy said it will be discussed further over the next few months at upcoming Task Force meetings.

Task Force members also thought that the idea of creating a large yard on Harvard's campus south of Western Ave. doesn't benefit the community. Kathy agreed that it is important for Harvard to be conscious of creating open space opportunities both internally on Harvard's campus and externally in areas where the community and the campus come together.

Harry Mattison suggested that the proposed plan seems to create open space areas where there already are open spaces. He thought that the plan should capitalize on the opportunity to create open space where it is currently lacking and bring open space into the neighborhood core. Millie suggested that a good improvement would be to eliminate buildings at the edge of Smith Field Park. Ray suggested that Smith Field Park was on the wrong side of the street and questioned whether it would be more useful and accessible elsewhere. Kathy said that down the road Harvard could consider the possibility of making a swap with the neighborhood for the Smith Field land to provide a better open space in the core of the neighborhood. Harry said that Mahoney's on Western Ave. looks more beautiful than some parks and should be thought about as a different kind of open space amenity.

Cathi Campbell said that on one of the handouts provided it looked like Harvard had purchased residential property near the corner of Adamson and Franklin St. Kathy Spiegelman stated that to the best of her knowledge Harvard does not own a residence at this location, and stressed that Harvard has no intention of purchasing residential property. Gerald stated that the map in the handout was a BRA map, and that the Harvard land holdings as shown on the map need to be verified and corrected, as necessary, in consultation with Harvard's GIS staff.

Kathy said that Harvard intends to file its Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP NF) with the city at the end of April, and that the purpose of filing the IMP NF is to start the process and open up the dialogue between the city, the community and Harvard. The IMP NF will touch upon the following topics: transportation, environmental protection, urban design, infrastructure systems, job training and work force development, and community benefits. The initial filing will not have very specific or detailed information on each topic, but Harvard will address each topic to some degree. The IMP NF is intended to provide basic information about the projects in order to allow the BRA to issue a "Scoping Determination" that will tell Harvard which aspects and potential impacts of the projects need to be studied and addressed.

Paul suggested that before we get too far in to the project, the existing transportation problems should be solved first. For example, solution should be developed for the chronic traffic on

North Harvard St. Paul suggested eliminating on-street parking between 7:00-9:00 a.m. and between 4:00-6:00 p.m. Ray suggested that parking meters should be put on N. Harvard St. and Western Ave. Paul pointed out that in the morning construction vehicles and tractor trailers are always parked on N. Harvard St. by the stadium. Things such as repaving the road and improving drainage also need to be looked into. Ray thought that Harvard should try and use its influence to help push some of these improvements forward. Kathy said that as part of the planning process Harvard will also address construction mitigation issues.

Kathy referred Task Force members to the summary from the Project for Public Spaces Workshop on Barry's Corner and asked for comments and feedback on sections 6 and 7: Western Avenue- Possible Cultural Uses, Public Realm at Science Center. Rita suggested that it would be great if Harvard could do at least one thing that community wanted from each category. Ray said that Harvard should use the science facilities for programs for the community and younger children to help introduce them to science. Harry suggested that there should be some sort of visual cue in the exterior designs of the science building and the temporary art museums to help signal to the community what the buildings are and what they are being used for. Harry also suggested that it seems like Harvard might be a better landlord than the State and that Harvard should consider purchasing some of the state owned land in the neighborhood such as the DCR stable buildings. Kathy said that the old Verizon building is being considered as a location for arts activities for both the community and the university. Kathy invited any Task Force members who were interested to join her and her staff for a tour of the Genzyme Building, which was designed by Behnisch, at noon on April 26th. If Task Force members are unable to attend the tour Stefan Behnisch will be at the Task Force meeting on April 26th.

Kathy turned the meeting over to Gerald to discuss the Institutional Master Plan Process. Gerald said that it might be useful for Task Force members to look at a map on the BRA web site that shows the existing zoning uses and regulations through out the city. The Boston Zoning Code tells real estate developers what land uses, building types and sizes, heights and densities are appropriate on land throughout the city. The Institutional Master Plan was developed by the city to be used as a review and approval mechanism for institutional development. As a result there is a quid pro quo relationship between the city and institutions. In exchange for the city allowing the institution to write its own zoning boundaries within its designated land, the institution must provide the city with as much information as it can for a 5-year program and plans. Gerald displayed a chart demonstrating the elements of Harvard's campus planning and development to illustrate the different phasing steps that will be occurring simultaneously. Harvard currently has an existing IMP that they will be amending to include the development of the first science building and cultural programs. At the same time Harvard is in the process of finalizing its master planning process with its consulting firm Cooper, Robertson and Partners so that it can file a new IMP with the city that will project Harvard's 10-year program and plans. All of this is incorporated into Harvard's long-term vision. While the IMP is designed to provide the institution with some flexibility, the BRA requires that a clear planning framework be established. Any proposed projects must be compatible with this larger framework before they can be approved.

Ray disagreed with the idea of Harvard filing an amendment to its current IMP to include the science and culture programs because he thought that if Harvard is going to initiate these

development projects then they need to be in the context of a long term plan. He also thought that the last time Harvard amended its IMP that it was agreed that there would be no further amendments and that rather Harvard would have to file a new IMP. Gerald said that the amendment will not be divorced from the existing and long term plan that Harvard will simultaneously be completing in order to file a new IMP. Kathy said that an amendment to an existing IMP has to go through the same review process and scrutiny as filing a new IMP and that it was really a technicality whether you called it an amendment or a new IMP. Kathy explained that it was Harvard's intention to file an amendment because there are immediate program needs that Harvard would like to begin to address. Filing an amendment will allow Harvard to get the process started while it simultaneously finishes up its master plan. An initial filing for the larger IMP would occur prior to the BRA issuing final approval for the proposed amendment. Cathi C. agreed with Ray and was not in favor of an amendment. She said that because of the quid pro quo relationship Harvard should be presenting its long term vision not just an amendment. Gerald emphasized that an amendment or new IMP would not be approved in the absence a long term vision and framework.

Kathy explained Harvard's anticipated time frame. Harvard hopes to file an Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP NF) for the amendment at the end of April 2006. Filing the IMP NF with the city gets the process started and is the mechanism that begins the formal discussion between Harvard, the BRA, and the Task Force. Simultaneously, Harvard will be finishing its master plan and expects to file a notification form (IMP NF) for the new IMP by the end of 2006. It is expected that the BRA would not grant final approval of the IMP Amendment until Harvard has filed a notification form for the new IMP. Kevin McCluskey explained that Harvard is in a unique situation because it is setting out to provide a 50 year long-term vision. While Harvard is not at that point yet, it does want to get the process started. For various reasons some things need to be started first but it will all be folded into the same long term vision. Kevin said that in the end it's all about the same results that both Harvard and the community want and that Harvard wants predictability as much as the community. Gerald said that the BRA felt comfortable with starting the process with the amendment since it will be incorporated into the context of a larger plan. Brian Golden asked whether there would be any new projects other than science and culture that would be proposed between the filing of the IMP NF for the Amendment in April 2006, and the filing of the IMP NF for the larger IMP by the end of 2006. Kathy said Harvard does not foresee any other new projects during this time frame.

Gerald passed out handouts showing the Article 80 milestones and the IMP approval process. Once Harvard files the IMP NF, there is a 30-day public comment period, and the BRA has 45 days from the filing date to issue a Scoping Determination outlining those issues/impacts that Harvard must study and address as part of its IMP (or IMP Amendment). Once the Scoping Determination is issued, there is no specific time frame set forth in Article 80 for Harvard to complete its analysis and file the actual IMP or IMP Amendment document. During this time period, the BRA, the community, and Harvard work together to discuss Harvard's proposed responses to the Scoping Determination. Once Harvard files the actual IMP (or IMP Amendment) document, there is a 60-day public comment period, and the BRA has 90 days from the filing date to issue an Adequacy Determination, which requires a vote of the BRA Board. The IMP or IMP Amendment then goes to the Boston Zoning Commission for approval.

Gerald introduced Adam Schulman from the Boston Transportation Department (BTD). He encouraged the Task Force members and attendees to contact the BTD with their comments and suggestions about transportation and roadway issues in the neighborhood to help BTD determine what changes/improvements could be made.

John Cusack made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 29th. Cathi C. second the motion and the minutes were approved.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.